

COMMUTING PROFILE

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

MARCH 2025

Overview

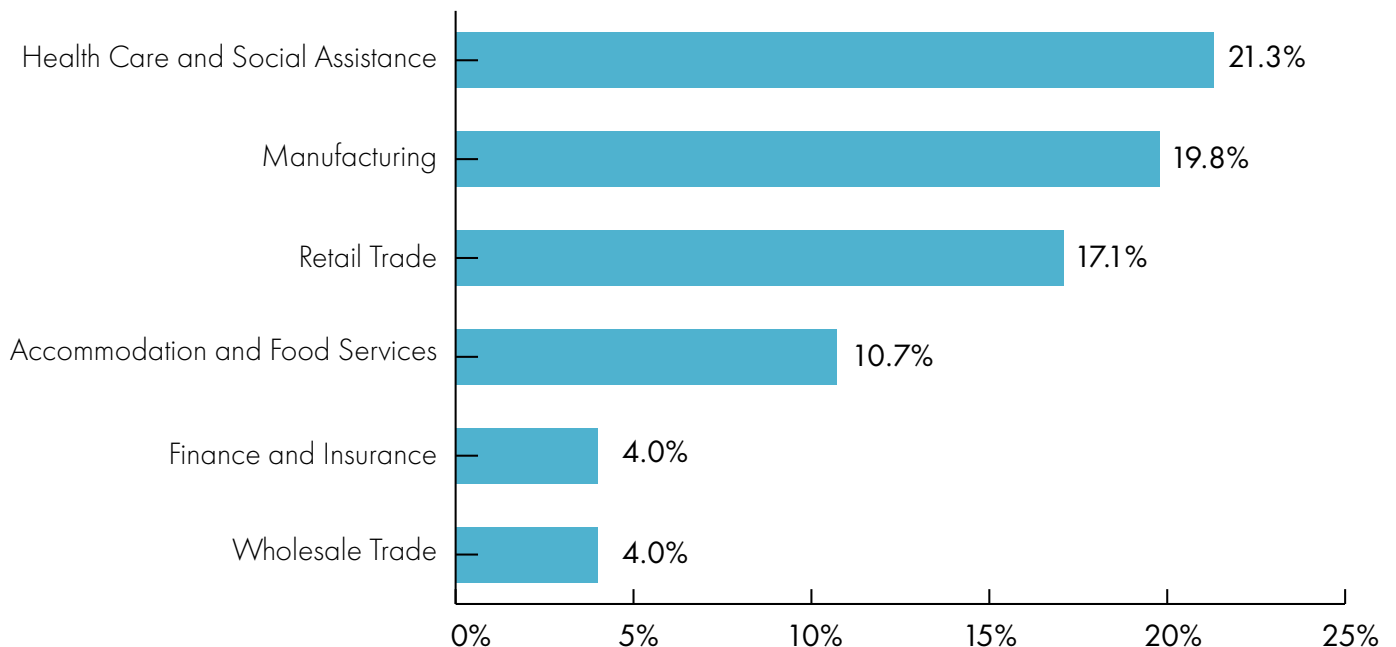
The South Central Workforce Development Area (WDA) consists of 12 counties: Butler, Carter, Douglas, Howell, Oregon, Ozark, Reynolds, Ripley, Shannon, Texas, Wayne, and Wright. Poplar Bluff and West Plains are among the largest cities in the region. In 2022, the South Central WDA employed 1.9 percent of Missouri's workforce. Nearly half (49.4%) of the workers in the region were aged 30 to 54. Workers aged 29 or younger were 26.6 percent of the workforce and those 55 or older were 24 percent. In 2022, 44.9 percent earned between \$1,251 and \$3,333 per month in the South Central WDA and 33 percent earned more than \$3,333 per month. The remaining 22.1 percent earned \$1,250 per month or less. In 2022, there were more women (51.1%) than men (48.9%) in the South Central WDA workforce.

In 2022, 32.6 percent of employees living in the South Central WDA commuted fewer than 10 miles to work, 28.9 percent of workers commuted more than 50 miles, 21.8 percent traveled 10 to 24 miles, and 15.8 percent commuted 25 to 50 miles.

Industry

Health Care and Social Assistance was the largest employing industry in the region at 9,306 jobs (21.3% of total jobs in the region). *Manufacturing, Retail Trade, and Accommodation and Food Services* were other major industry sectors having at least 10 percent of the region's employment share. Poplar Bluff, West Plains, and Mountain Grove were the top cities for employment in the South Central WDA.

Top South Central WDA Industry - Employment Percentage



Where the South Central Labor Force Works and Lives

Of the 43,749 workers employed in the South Central WDA in 2022, 71.3 percent commuted to work from within the region. The remainder (28.7%) commuted into South Central WDA from homes outside of the region.

| Description | 2022 | |
|--|--------|--------|
| | Count | Share |
| South Central WDA Labor Market Size | | |
| Employed in the South Central WDA | 43,749 | 100.0% |
| Living in the South Central WDA | 52,363 | 119.7% |
| Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-) | -8,614 | - |
| In-Area Labor Force Efficiency | | |
| Living in the South Central WDA | 52,363 | 100.0% |
| Living and Employed in the South Central WDA | 31,185 | 59.6% |
| Living in the South Central WDA but Employed Outside | 21,178 | 40.4% |
| In-Area Employment Efficiency | | |
| Employed in the South Central WDA | 43,749 | 100.0% |
| Employed and Living in the South Central WDA | 31,185 | 71.3% |
| Employed in the South Central WDA but Living Outside | 12,564 | 28.7% |

Of the region’s residents who were in the workforce, 40.4 percent, or 21,178, commuted to jobs outside of the region. The South Central WDA attracted 12,564 workers from outside of the region. More than 31,000 South Central WDA residents lived and worked in the region.

The top five Missouri counties where Central WDA workers resided (in descending order) were Howell, Butler, Texas, Wright, and Ripley.

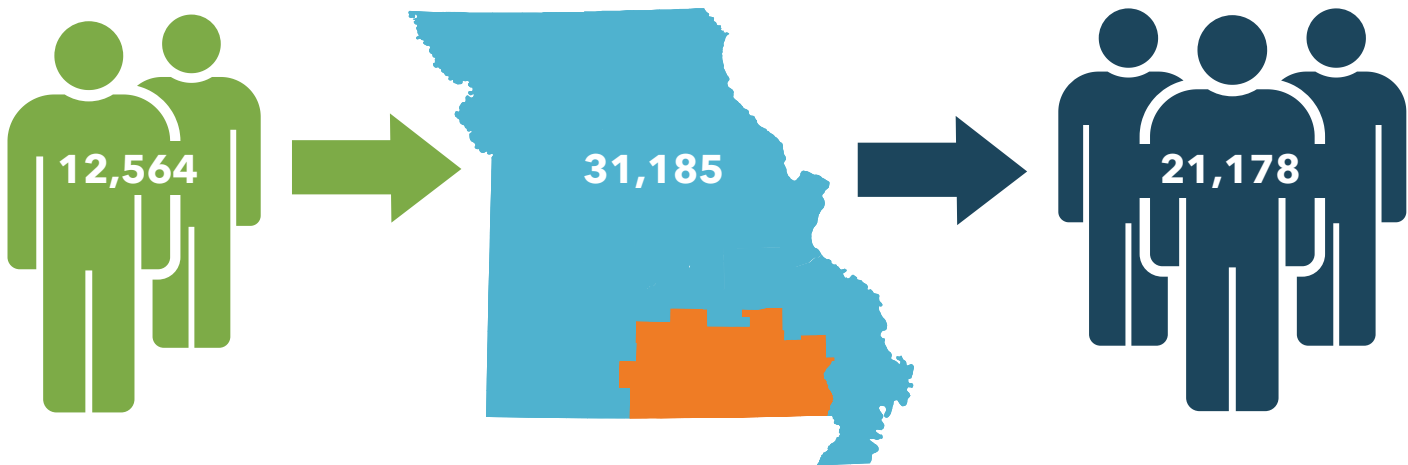
Inflow/Outflow

Overall, 52,363 employees lived in the South Central WDA and 43,749 workers were employed in the region, resulting in a net outflow of 8,614 workers from the region.

Internal Jobs Filled by
Outside Workers

Internal Jobs Filled by
Residents

External Jobs Filled by
Residents



The following table shows the worker composition for the job inflow and outflow groups as well as worker characteristics of the interior job flow. Of the 31,185 individuals who lived and worked in the region, 25.9 percent were aged 29 years or younger, 49.8 percent were aged 30 to 54 years, and 24.3 percent were aged 55 years or older. More than half worked in the Services industry.

| South Central WDA Description | 2022 | |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| | Count | Share |
| Outflow Job Characteristics | | |
| External Jobs Filled by Residents | 21,178 | 100.0% |
| Workers Aged 29 or younger | 6,063 | 28.6% |
| Workers Aged 30 to 54 | 10,397 | 49.1% |
| Workers Aged 55 or older | 4,718 | 22.3% |
| Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less | 4,037 | 19.1% |
| Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month | 8,244 | 38.9% |
| Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month | 8,897 | 42.0% |
| Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class | 4,697 | 22.2% |
| Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class | 7,004 | 33.1% |
| Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class | 9,477 | 44.7% |
| Inflow Job Characteristics | | |
| Internal Jobs Filled by Outside Workers | 12,564 | 100.0% |
| Workers Aged 29 or younger | 3,579 | 28.5% |
| Workers Aged 30 to 54 | 6,084 | 48.4% |
| Workers Aged 55 or older | 2,901 | 23.1% |
| Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less | 2,997 | 23.9% |
| Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month | 5,073 | 40.4% |
| Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month | 4,494 | 35.8% |
| Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class | 2,629 | 20.9% |
| Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class | 4,289 | 34.1% |
| Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class | 5,646 | 44.9% |
| Interior Flow Job Characteristics | | |
| Internal Jobs Filled by Residents | 31,185 | 100.0% |
| Workers Aged 29 or younger | 8,079 | 25.9% |
| Workers Aged 30 to 54 | 15,519 | 49.8% |
| Workers Aged 55 or older | 7,587 | 24.3% |
| Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less | 6,679 | 21.4% |
| Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month | 14,555 | 46.7% |
| Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month | 9,951 | 31.9% |
| Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class | 8,583 | 27.5% |
| Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class | 6,609 | 21.2% |
| Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class | 15,993 | 51.3% |

Commuter Pattern

The top 10 counties where South Central WDA residents worked (in descending order) were Howell, Butler, Greene, Texas, Wright, St. Louis County, Ripley, Stoddard, Oregon, and Douglas. All but Butler and Howell counties had at least half of their residents commuting outside their county of residence for work.

The table below indicates that many workers commuted to another county for employment. Larger cities, such as Poplar Bluff and West Plains, attracted workers from the surrounding counties. The South Central WDA's access to U.S. Highway 60 improves the ability of region's residents to commute to their workplace.

| South Central WDA | | | |
|---|-----|----------|-----|
| Percent of Employees Working Outside of Home County | | | |
| Butler | 43% | Reynolds | 63% |
| Carter | 69% | Ripley | 69% |
| Douglas | 76% | Shannon | 67% |
| Howell | 38% | Texas | 68% |
| Oregon | 67% | Wayne | 76% |
| Ozark | 76% | Wright | 71% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2022*), URL: <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

**2022 is the latest year for which LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (commuting data) is available from the U.S. Census Bureau. To maintain the consistency of data in this report, all relevant data used is also from 2022, although later data for some data points was available.*

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